

Remarks

This amendment is responsive to the official action mailed May 26, 2004, and is accompanied by a Petition for Extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) and the fee required for a two month extension.

Also submitted are proposed drawing corrections. Objection was made to the drawings for the presence of extraneous lead lines, notations in German, and some improper crosshatches in the cross-sections. In response, the drawings have been corrected and Applicant submits herewith corrected replacement drawing sheets and annotated copies. The following additional changes have been made to the drawings: (1) the lead line for the reference numeral 15 in Fig. 9 has been revised to point to the correct structure as provided by the original Specification; (2) a corresponding reference numeral "15" for the undercut has been added to Fig. 10; and (3) a reference numeral "26" for the square-shaped flange has been added to Fig. 13 as provided by the original Specification.

Objection was made to the Specification for improper content of the Abstract and lack of headings such as "Brief Description of the Drawings," etc. in the body of the Specification. The Abstract has been rewritten and a new Abstract is submitted herewith on a separate sheet per 37 C.F.R. § 1.72. The recommended headings have been inserted in the Specification. Additional amendments have been made to the Specification to correct typographical errors and to clarify the description of the invention without adding new matter.

Paragraph [0006] in the amended Specification is a copy of the originally filed Abstract. Thus the addition of this paragraph does not add new matter to the disclosure.

The claims were considered indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims have been amended to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. The claims as amended are definite. No new matter

is presented. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under Section 112 (2d para.) are requested.

Claims 1-17 are identified as rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by German patent DE 19911574 A1. Reconsideration is requested in view of this amendment. The prior art of record, including DE 19911574 A1, does not meet or suggest the subject matter of amended claim 1 as a whole.

Amended claim 1 recites a plug-in connector for plumbing fixtures with a plug-in bushing associated with the plumbing fixture; an undercut associated with the plug-in bushing, and a flange having a non-circular shaped perimeter, the flange being attachable to a line near an end of the line, wherein the line is connected to the plumbing fixture by inserting the line with the flange thereon into the plug-in bushing beyond the undercut, and engaging the flange with the undercut by rotating the flange. (emphasis added). The DE reference does not disclose or suggest the invention claimed as a whole.

Using a non-circular flange on the end of the line, the flange can be passed beyond the undercut upon insertion of the line and attached flange into the bushing. The line is structurally attached to the plug-in bushing when the flange, is rotated because part of the flange moves behind the undercut and thereby prevents withdrawal from the bushing of the flange and the attached line. This subject matter is not found in DE 19911574. The dependent claims define additional aspects that likewise are not found in the prior art.

The structure and operation of the invention as described and claimed is supported in the disclosure, for example, at paragraphs [0047] and [0048] and is shown throughout the drawings. A non-circular shaped flange such as square flange 26, attached near an end of a hose, is inserted into an aperture 32 of a plug-in bushing of a plumbing fixture, which in the subject embodiment is also square. By rotating the end of the hose 45° with the flange inserted to pass the undercut edge, the flange 26 engages behind the undercut at aperture 32 and prevents withdrawal of the line from the fitting,

unless the structure should be rotated to again align the non-circular flange 26 with the aperture 32.

The cited reference, DE 19911574 A1, does not disclose or suggest such a structure. As illustrated in Figures 1 through 4 of DE 19911574 A1, the connecting assembly disclosed therein shows a hose 25 having a rigid sleeve 22 at one end for connecting to a plumbing fixture. Near the end 23 of the sleeve 22 is provided a circumferential groove 24. Into this groove 24 is inserted a slotted ring element 20. The slot in the ring element 20 is denoted by the reference numeral 21. This slot provides radial clearance whereby the resilient ring element 20 can be squeezed into a smaller diameter than element 20 occupies at rest, namely squeezed inwardly into groove 24. When compressed into groove 24, the ring element 20 can be inserted into the opening while carried in groove 24 of sleeve 22. When the sleeve 22 is axially inserted far enough into the opening 16, ring element 20 resiliently expands in diameter, engaging in a circumferential groove 27 cut into the inner surface of the opening 16, while still carried in groove 24. Thus, the ring element 20 creates an interference between the sleeve 22 and the opening 16 of the connecting member 5 and prevents the sleeve 22 from being removed from the opening 16.

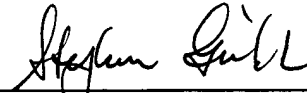
Therefore, in DE 19911574, the engagement of the ring element 20 with the groove 27 of the opening 16 does not require "rotating" the sleeve 22. In fact, the rotational position and/or relative rotational movement appear to be irrelevant to DE 19911574. The connecting assembly disclosed in DE 19911574 does not include any "flange having a non-circular shaped perimeter." There is no suggestion of any rotational locking aspect to DE 19911574.

DE 19911574 therefore does not disclose or suggest the invention defined in applicant's independent claim 1 as amended. The remaining claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Thus, the pending claims are properly allowable as now presented. Applicant requests reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102, and allowance of the claims.

The formal matters to which the examiner refers have each been corrected. The disclosure is in proper form. The claims have been amended to particularly and distinctly define the subject matter regarded as the invention and more clearly to distinguish over the prior art of record. The differences between the invention and the prior art are such that the subject matter claimed, as a whole, is not shown to have been known or obvious. Therefore, the claims as amended are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: Oct. 11, 2004

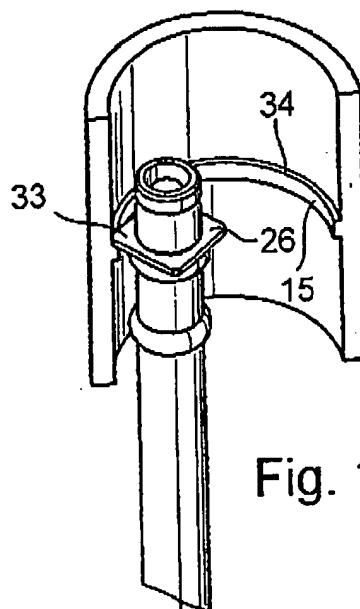
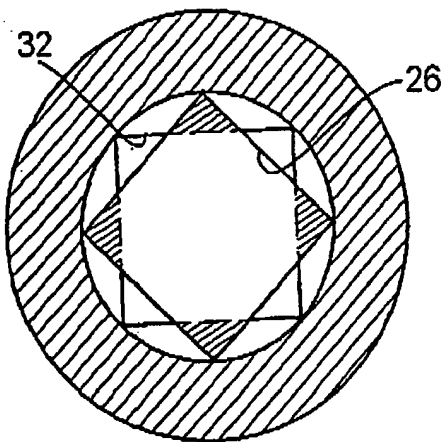
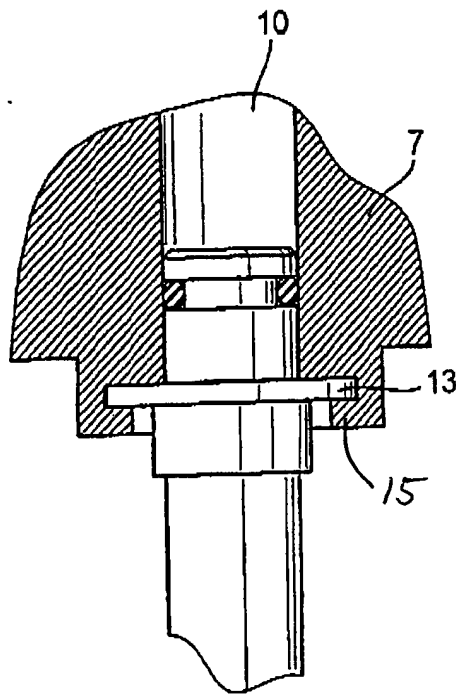
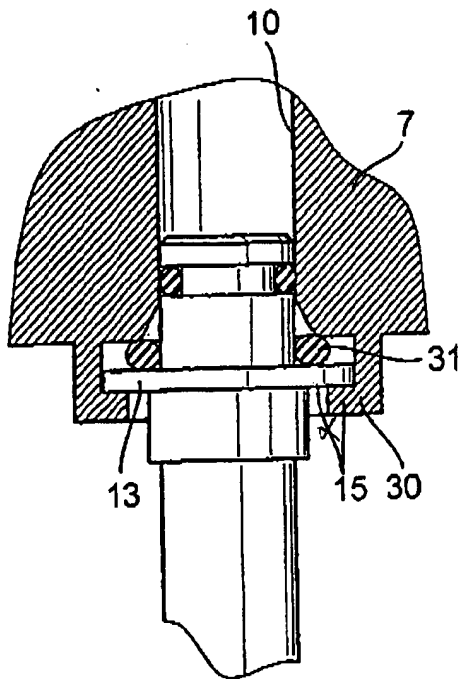


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Docket No. 3201-337
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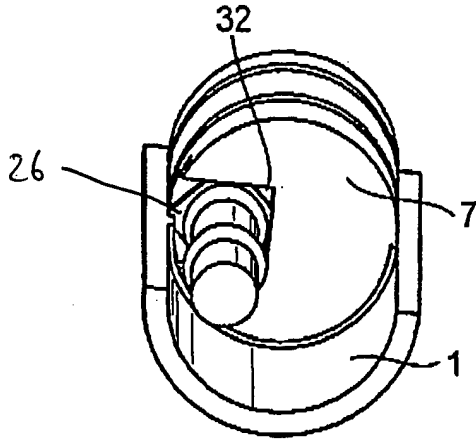


Fig. 13

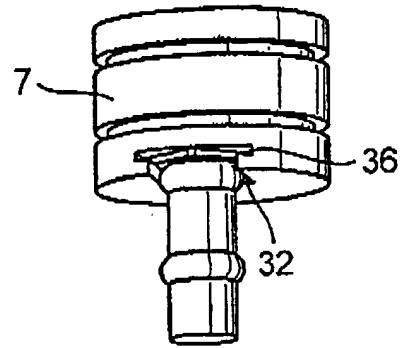


Fig. 14

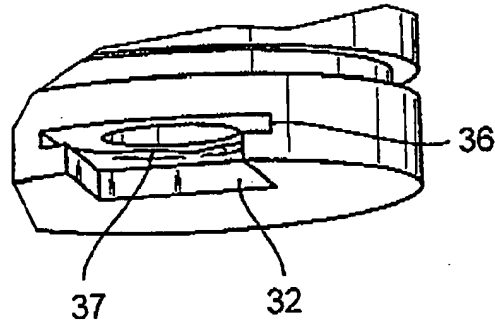


Fig. 15

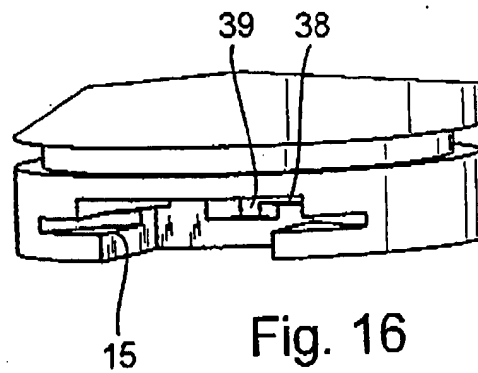


Fig. 16